

SN: 09/631,502

Amendment dated September 10, 2003

Reply to Office action mailed June 10, 2003

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:

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--FIG. 5 is a distal end-on view of surgical instrument 10. In this view, it will be appreciated that the tapered distal tip 16 of collecting element 15 can include a distal apex 41 to facilitate passing instrument 10 between adjacent surfaces in a surgical field. FIG. 6 is a transverse cross-section view through line 6-6 of surgical instrument 10 illustrating blade 9 in relation to shaft 10. Blade 9 has a cutting height cH , measured between first cutting edge 11 and second cutting edge 12. Blade 9 also has a distraction height dH , measured between rounded distraction surfaces 13, 14. The cutting height cH is less than the distraction height dH .